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Draft report

Addendum

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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 20. Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. At its 23rd meeting, on 21 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 20, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 20)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the programme of work proposed in this section. It was noted, however, that some activities deserved greater attention.

4. The view was expressed that activities considered obsolete, ineffective or of marginal usefulness should have been identified and proposed for termination by the General Assembly.

5. The view was expressed that the text on expected accomplishments should have been more precise. It was also recognized that the approach to expected accomplishments was at an experimental stage. The view was also expressed that these expected accomplishments, required by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, needed to be further refined.

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6. It was noted that matters related to human rights were approached from a social and economic perspective. The view was expressed that the formulation of paragraph 20.3 (b) should be in line with the legislative mandate approved in paragraph 18.5 (h) of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001.

7. With respect to financial resources, it was felt that programme activities should receive a greater share in the distribution of resources within the section and that programme support should be further reduced. Concern was expressed regarding the steep decrease of extrabudgetary resources.

8. It was noted that the vacancy rate should be kept under review and measures should be taken to reduce it.

9. Views were expressed that the use of consultants should be in accordance with General Assembly guidelines and that particular attention should be given to the geographical diversification of the consultants hired by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 20, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 with the following modifications:

(a) The first sentence of paragraph 20.3 (b) should be: "In line with the revised medium-term plan, gender and issues pertaining to the right to development are mainstreamed in the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2000–2001".